

Early Start Act Annual Report Overview

Overview: In June, 2015 the Early Start Act (ESA) was approved by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Jay Inslee. The Early Start Act focuses on improving access to high-quality early learning opportunities in Washington as a key path to improving outcomes in young children and promoting strong school readiness rates. The Early Start Act developed key, achievable targets that will increase access to high quality early learning opportunities to the children most likely to benefit:

Participation Progress to Date

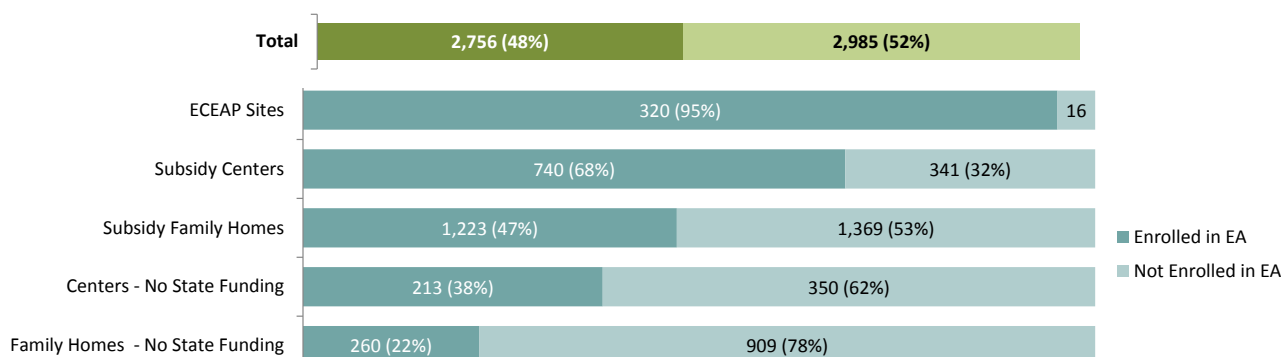
As of July 31, 2015, there were 2,756 child care centers, family home child care, and Head Start/ECEAP providers participating in Early Achievers. This number represents 45.8 percent of the 5,251 total licensed childcare sites in Washington, and 72 percent of the 490 Head Start and ECEAP sites.

Children on Subsidy: The Early Start Act requires participation in Early Achievers by providers that accept children on subsidy. Currently, Early Achievers participation is higher by both Child Care Centers and Family Home Child Care that have accepted subsidy payments during the 2015 fiscal year, and this trend was visible in every region of the state. More than half (53 percent) of the licensed child care providers that accept children on subsidy are participating in Early Achievers. Of these 18 percent have achieved the required rating level and an additional 36 percent have completed all Level 2 activities. Forty-six percent of licensed child care providers that will be required to enroll in Early Achievers by August 1, 2016 have not yet done so.

ESA Requirements

- All licensed child care providers serving non-school age children on subsidy will rate an Early Achievers Level 3-5 by 2020; all existing ECEAP providers will rate an Early Achievers Level 4-5 by March 2016 or begin remedial activities to rate a Level 4 by September 2016
- ECEAP will be available to all eligible children by the 2020-21 school year with part day, full school day, and extended day models
- Providers at Early Achievers Levels 3-5 will be eligible to receive contracted child care slots
- Creation of a single set of standards across licensing and ECEAP using Early Achievers as the framework for quality
- 12-month authorization for Working Connections Child Care to promote stability and high-quality
- Create assurances that early learning programs are available, supported and appropriate for diverse communities across the state

Early Achievers Participation by Acceptance of Subsidy or ECEAP Funding



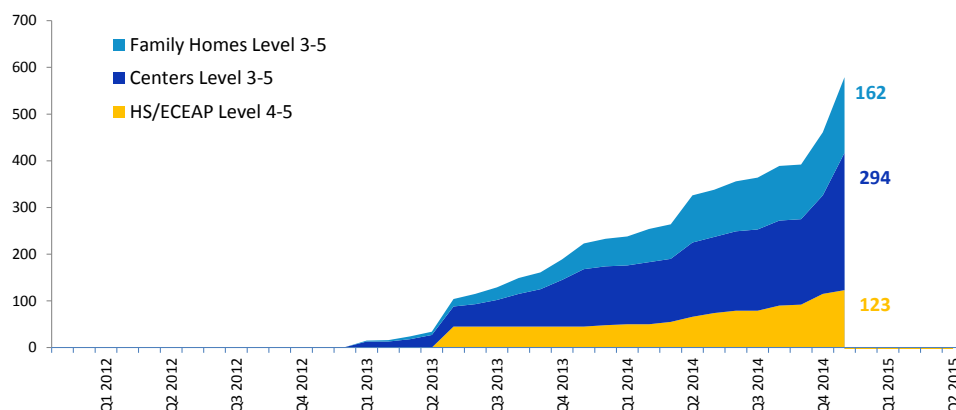
Attainment of High Quality: As of July 31, 2015, 345 Child Care Centers, 221 family home child care and 127 ECEAP/Head Start sites have been rated. Of these 693 sites, 579 (84 percent) received a rating of a Level 3 or higher. Those that did not will have an opportunity to be re-rated. Of the child care providers that have been rated, 80.5 percent have rated a Level 3 or higher. As of July 31, 2015, 345 child care centers and 221 Family Home Child Care have completed the ratings process. 85.2 percent of centers attained a Level 3 or higher rating, while 73.3 percent of family home child care attained a rating of Level 3 or higher.

Early Achievers Sites Rated Level 3-5

ECEAP

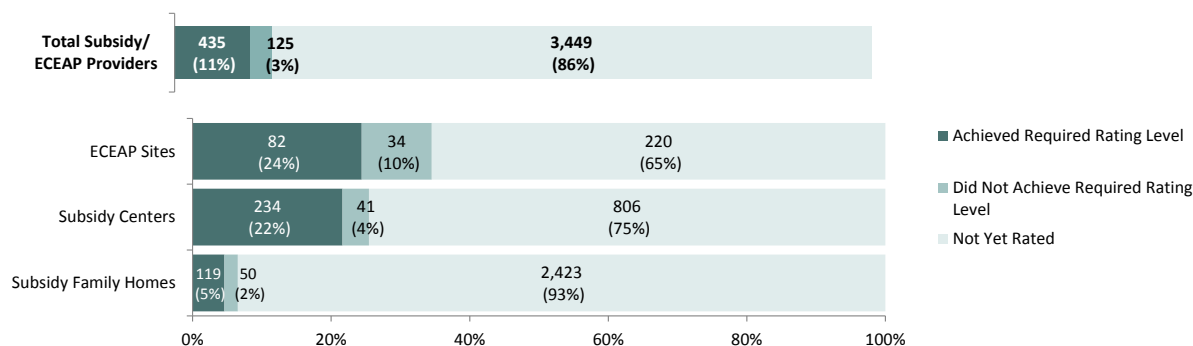
Requirements: The Early Start Act requires all existing ECEAP providers to be rated at a Level 4 or higher by March 1, 2016. Of the 336 ECEAP contractors providing ECEAP in the 2014-15 school year, 82 had met

this requirement as of July 31, 2015. However, 95 percent of ECEAP contractors were participating in Early Achievers by that date and were moving through the process.



Source: Data Analytics Repository (DAR), MERIT, ELMS, Famlink; July 30, 2015

Early Learning Providers Required to Meet ESA Timelines



Key Accomplishments

- Launching and scaling a new *voluntary* initiative that enrolled nearly half of state's licensed child care providers in 36 months. These strong participation rates in a voluntary system demonstrate that providers are willing to enroll and participate in quality improvement work.
- Capacity has built at all levels to provide training; relationship based professional development, and rating data collection. Services have been expanded in multiple languages and resources have been tailored for use in diverse communities.
- Protocols and policies have been updated to reflect ongoing learning and continuous quality improvement.

Key Challenges

- There is a need for better data. DEL needs the ability to use data to inform decisions and assess the effectiveness of its work. Currently, it lacks both the needed data and the ability to do real-time, in-house analysis of that data.
- Ensuring that children are not left without care because of a lack of providers that have met the requirements. This will require continuing to recruit providers that accept children on subsidy to ensure that capacity to serve these children isn't lost as Early Start Act timelines are reached.
- Making sure that Early Achievers protocols work well for all providers, particularly from diverse communities. Includes ensuring availability of resources in languages other than English and Spanish.